

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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TAGS: PINT, MT

SUBJ: NATIONALIST PARTY POLICY STATEMENTS

1. SUMMARY: AT INFORMAL PRESS BRIEFING FEB 6, NATIONALIST SHADOW MINISTER FOR LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS FENECH ADAMI AND SHADOW CABINET SECRETARY MUSCAT SPOKE ON NATIONALIST POLICY FAVORING FAMILY ALLOWANCES AND WORKER PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT; ITS PLANS FOR HOUSING AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT; AND ON THE DRYDOCKS SITUATION.

2. IN HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF PAST NATIONALIST POLICY PRIORITIES, F-A SAID IN FIRST TWO YEARS OF ITS ADMINISTRATION (1962-64) ITS MAIN GOAL WAS TO ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE. AS UNEMPLOYMENT WAS 8.1 PERCENT WHEN MALTA BECAME INDEPENDENT (1964), MAIN GOAL WAS THEN TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT. DURING THE PERIOD 1964 TO 1970 UNEMPLOYMENT WAS REDUCED TO 3.7 PERCENT. F-A MAINTAINED THAT RISE IN UNEMPLOYMENT IN 1970/71 WAS DUE TO NORMAL HESITATION TO INVEST PRIOR TO A GENERAL ELECTION.

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THE NP BELIEVES THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PRIONEER

CORPS WAS AN UNSATISFACTORY SOLUTION OF THE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM, BUT WHEN IT RETURNED TO POWER, IT WOULD GIVE THE VOLUNTEERS ALL RIGHTS AND CONDITIONS TO WHICH OTHER WORKERS ARE ENTITLED. THE PARTY HAD PLANS TO ATTRACT SUBSTANTIAL FOREIGN INVESTMENT, AND NO ONE WOULD HAVE TO BECOME A SOLDIER TO OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT.

3. F-A HELD THAT INCREASES IN SOCIAL WELFARE BENEFITS BY GOM WERE INSUFFICIENT TO MEET THE "VERY HIGH" COST OF LIVING INCREASES. THE NP IS COMMITTED TO INTRODUCE A NEW FAMILY ALLOWANCE PROGRAM. IT WAS UNABLE TO INTRODUCE THE PLAN BEFORE BECAUSE ITS FIRST PRIORITY WAS TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT. HE REFERRED TO NP SUCCESSES IN PUBLIC HOUSING IN THE PAST AND SAID THAT IT HAD A VERY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR FUTURE HOUSING PROJECTS.

4. F-A ANNOUNCED THAT NP PLATFORM BEING AMENDED TO OFFER REAL AND GENUINE WORKER PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT AND PROFITS. HE UNDERLINED IMPORTANCE OF TRADE UNIONS, BUT WARNED THAT THEY SHOULD AVOID BECOMING POLITICALLY ATTACHED TO ANY SINGLE POLITICAL PARTY TO THE PREJUDICE OF THE WORKERS.

5. MUSCAT ALSO SPOKE ON WORKER PARTICIPATION, STRESSING THAT THEIR REPRESENTATIVES (IN MANAGEMENT) SHOULD BE ELECTED BY THEMSELVES AND NOT BY THE TRADE UNIONS. THE GWU HAD GIVEN EXCUSES THAT THE WORKERS WERE NOT ABLE TO FILL THAT ROLE THEMSELVES. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE NP HAD BEEN CRITICIZED FOR EXCESSIVE EMIGRATION, BUT THAT THE AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRATION MINISTER (NOW VISITING MALTA) HAD HIMSELF SPOKE OF THE INCREASE IN MALTESE EMIGRANTS IN THE LAST TWO YEARS.

6. MUSCAT SPOKE AT LENGTH ON THE DRYDOCKS (LOCATED IN HIS DISTRICT) MAINTAINING THAT THE 40,000 POUND PROFIT RECENTLY ANNOUNCED HAD ACTUALLY COME FROM THE POCKETS OF THE WORKERS AS THE RESULT OF MINTOFF'S WAGE CUTS AND OTHER STRINGENT MEASURES. HE ASSERTED THAT AFTER TWO AND A HALF YEARS THE WORKERS HAD STILL NOT WON THE BENEFITS THEY WOULD HAVE ATTAINED UNDER THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NATIONALIST ADMINISTRATION IF THE GWU HADN'T TURNED DOWN THEIR OFFER AND ORDERED A SEVEN MONTH STRIKE IN 1970/71.

7. COMMENT: THIS BRIEFING IS PART OF A CURRENT NP POLITICAL CAMPAIGN TO AROUSE VOTER OPINION DURING A PERIOD OF STRAIN ON GOM AS A RESULT OF THE ENERGY CRISIS. THE CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHT WILL BE A FEB 7 RALLY AT A CINEMA IN SLIEMA WHICH WILL BE ADDRESSED BY BORG OLIVIER AND OTHER

NATIONALIST LEADERS. SIMILAR RALLIES HAVE IN THE PAST
RESULTED IN SERIOUS PUBLIC DISTURBANCES.

8. MUSCAT'S REMARKS WERE SIMILAR TO THE LINE HE HAS
BEEN TAKING IN PARLIAMENT AND IN THE THREE CITIES
AREA, WHERE MOST DRYDOCK WORKERS LIVE. FENECH ADAMI'S
STATEMENTS WERE CLEARLY ATTEMPTS TO PREEMPT AND EVEN
GET OUT AHEAD OF THE LABOR PARTY ON ISSUES IT CONSIDERS
OF MOST IMPORTANCE--EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING
AND WORKER PARTICIPATION. THE LATTER IS A PARTICULARLY
THORNY ISSUE FOR MALTESE INDUSTRIALISTS, BUT SOME
MAINTAIN THAT SOME MOVEMENT IN THAT DIRECTION MIGHT BE
NECESSARY TO AVOID HAVING GOM FORCE PARTICIPATION ON
ITS TERMS RATHER THAN THEIRS. ONE IMPORTANT LOCAL
ENTREPRENEUR SAYS THAT HE WOULD BE GLAD TO HAVE WORKER
PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT IF THEY AT THE SAME TIME
WOULD PURCHASE EQUITY.GETZ

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